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KNICKS WELCOME LEBRON TO MSG {page 11}

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WEEKEND
NEW YORK
November 2-4, 2012

MILES DIXON/METRO

THE LONG ROAD AHEAD

Days after Hurricane Sandy, people still sorting through mess storm brought Subways, buses slowly get back to limited service Death toll rises to over three dozen in city Staten Island is worst off {page 02}

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WHEN WILL IT END?

Dozens killed around five boroughs ◗ Hundreds of thousands with no power as Lower Manhattan goes dark ◗ Officials work to restore subway

MILES DIXON/METRO

▶ Staten Island, where there are overhead power lines, was hit hard and won't have power back for a week or more.

Some subways returned to the rails inside formerly flooded tunnels Thursday, as New Yorkers emerged from powerless apartments to encounter Hurricane Sandy's wrath.

Sandy blew through Monday night, pushing rivers that envelop the island into waterside neighborhoods like the Lower East Side and Battery Park City.

Over 500,000 were still without power yesterday, and drivers had difficulty finding gas.

The storm killed 37 people, from a cop moving family into a Staten Island attic to a Bushwick high school teacher walking her dog.

"Our hearts are filled with sorrow," Mayor Michael Bloomberg said Thursday. Governor Andrew Cuomo called scenes "apocalyptic."

The subway system, ravaged by salt water gushing into underground tunnels, began limited service Thursday. No trains will run below 34th Street, where no power exists.

Trains can "absolutely not" run until electricity is restored downtown, an MTA spokeswoman told Metro.

Metro-North, the LIRR and buses returned to service Wednesday.

New York seemed a tale of two cities, with Midtown businesses bustling and Red Hook residents struggling to start flooded cars and charge phones.

"It looked like they opened the levees of Hurricane Katrina on us or something," Tamika Nixon, 34, told Metro.

— Reporting by Alison Bowen, Cassandra Garrison and Danielle Tcholakian

$18M
Amount MTA head Joe Lhota estimates the MTA loses every day the subways and trains are not running

100
Towers the NYPD erected to flood light nto blacked-out areas of the city

6,000
New Yorkers still living in shelters as of Thursday afternoon

2
Children found dead in Staten Island, after they were swept from their mother's arms

300K
Gallons of fuel spilled by Staten Island from a damaged storage tank

3
Number of passengers cars entering Manhattan yesterday needed in order to cross one of the city's bridges

In the news

Bloomberg will support Obama in election

Former Republican — and current independent — Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced he would endorse President Barack Obama on Thursday. He cited Obama's record on climate change as one reason for his support, just days after Hurricane Sandy blew through the city. Bloomberg cited his steps to reduce carbon emissions as a mitigating factor. **METRO**

We're back

Metro is delighted to be back in circulation in New York City, after a four-day break caused by Hurricane Sandy.

We all live and work in New York and we share the anguish, loss and frustration felt by our neighbors in this most difficult of weeks.

The dangerous conditions and the ongoing power outage at our Lower Manhattan offices, meant we couldn't bring you your favorite newspaper.

However, Metro is back in circulation this morning at key locations across the city. And check out our full coverage at metro.us and on Twitter @metronewyork.

Stubborn power outages still linger

About 508,000 customers in the New York City area were still without electricity Thursday, according to Con Ed officials, who called the situation the largest storm-related outage in its history.

Con Ed said people serviced by underground power lines in Manhattan and Brooklyn can expect their power restored within the next few days.

508K Customers without power in New York City as of Thursday afternoon

It could take more than a week to restore electricity to those in other boroughs who are serviced by overhead power lines, because many were damaged and grounded, officials said. **METRO/CG**

NYPD

▶ Kasprzak

Storm kills dozens across five boroughs

Hurricane Sandy claimed at least 37 lives as it ripped through New York City leaving darkness and destruction in its path.

The first reported death during the storm was a 31-year-old man killed when a tree fell on his Flushing home Monday.

This number also included a woman walking her dog and another who stepped on a live wire during the storm.

Police said Staten Island cop Arthur Kasprzak, 28, a six-year veteran, died when he was trying to help his family get to safety.

In Brooklyn, Jessie Streich-Kest, a Bushwick high school teacher, and Jacob Vogelman were crushed by a tree in Ditmas Park as they walked her dog, which survived. **METRO/AB**

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News in brief

Politician calls rape 'inflicting violence onto a woman's body'

Tea Party politician John Koster, the Republican nominee for a hotly contested congressional seat in Washington state, says he opposes abortions, even in cases of "the rape thing," because it is tantamount to inflicting "more violence onto a woman's body."

The Snohomish County councilman made the comments during a weekend fundraising appearance in the Puget Sound city of Everett, north of Seattle, that was captured in a recording released on Wednesday by the liberal activist group Fuse Washington. **REUTERS**

Car sales to fall short due to Sandy

General Motors Co and Chrysler Group LLC both reported their strongest U.S. sales for the month of October since the financial crisis sent both U.S. automakers into bankruptcy, but the destruction of storm Sandy will cause the sector to miss overall sales expectations.

Ford Motor Co's sales last month edged up 0.4 percent, while Toyota Motor Corp's sales rose about 16 percent.

GM sales rose 4.7 percent to 195,764 vehicles, while those at Chrysler, an affiliate of Italy's Fiat SpA, increased 10 percent to 126,185 vehicles. Both totals were the best either automaker had seen since 2007. **REUTERS**

Obama stumps again

After three days of attending to Sandy relief, president back to campain Uses positive message

After three days of focusing on superstorm Sandy, President Barack Obama returned to the campaign trail on Thursday with a more "affirmative" message to win over undecided voters in the final days of the race for the White House.

With polls showing a tight contest between the Democratic incumbent and Republican challenger Mitt Romney before Tuesday's election, Obama will use trips to political battleground states to make a closing appeal for a second term.

That argument will touch on points he has made for months about the choice between competing Republican and Democratic visions, Obama advisers said, but it will put more weight on Obama's ideas for the future and could resurrect some of the hopeful themes that helped him win election in 2008.

47 Percent of likely voters plan to vote for Obama according to yesterday's Reuters-Ipsos poll. Romney was just behind at 46 percent.

"You're going to see him lift up ... the vision of what we're fighting for," senior campaign strategist David Axelrod said in an interview last week before the storm, adding the construction of Obama's "stump" speech would alter slightly in the final days.

The president has not given a traditional campaign speech since Saturday. **REUTERS**

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Obama attended a campaign rally in Green Bay, Wisc. on Thursday morning.

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weekend

WHY DENZEL TOOK 'FLIGHT'

The A-lister dissects his project choices while offering up some of his recurring dreams for analysis ◐ Playing a pilot struggling with addiction was 'raw'

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

▶ Denzel Washington stars as a troubled pilot in "Flight," which opens Friday.

We at least now know how Denzel Washington would answer the age-old question of which super power is better to have, invisibility or flight. "I have a flying dream. I've had it for most of my life," Washington says, opening himself up to amateur dream interpreters everywhere. "Somehow I always end up near the city and I go underneath bridges. And I would just work my way down, and I'd stay under them. Then I would have the other part of the dream, it would be this takeoff forever, and I would be like, 'Oh, I've got to stay below the street wires.' And then I'm starting to go back up, but then, you know, I've got to get back below the wires. I don't know what it means. I have no idea about what it means."

Quoted

"I wouldn't say it was easy. But you're raw. It was just raw. Your nerves are raw."
WASHINGTON

Washington engages in a slightly different kind of flying in "Flight," his latest film from director Robert Zemeckis. In it, the Oscar-winner portrays a talented but troubled pilot who brazenly lands a malfunctioning plane with minimal casualties — but he happens to be coming off a booze- and cocaine-fueled bender at the time. What unfolds is a man lauded as a hero and forced to face his demons at the same time.

The role was definitely a challenge for Washington — but then again, he likes a challenge. "I wouldn't say it was easy," he says of playing out the turmoil of his character's life. "But you're raw. It was just raw. Your nerves are raw."

And it certainly beats the alternative. "You know, tough spots for me are pictures I don't want to be on," he says. "When the people say, 'What's the hardest part of a movie?' You know, if you're on a movie and it's like the third day and you go, 'How many days have we been shooting?' 'Like, three.' 'How many more have we got to go?' '117.' That's a tough movie for me. But this was an adventure."
NED EHRBAR/MWN

Keeping project promises

As for what drew Washington to the project in the first place, it turns out making "Flight" was part of keeping a promise to an old, departed friend.

"My agent, the late Ed Limato, the last two scripts he gave me were 'Flight' and 'Safe House,'" Washington explains. "That was a part of it — a promise I made to him."

Review

'Wreck-It Ralph'

Director: Rich Moore
Cast: John C. Reilly, Jack McBrayer, Sarah Silverman
Rating: PG
Grade: ❶❷❸❹❺

Wreck-It Ralph (Reilly), the bad guy of "Fix-It Felix, Jr." — the most popular game in the arcade — is suffering a midlife crisis. After 30 years of wrecking a video apartment building only to watch Felix (McBrayer) take credit for fixing it, Ralph (Reilly) is in an existential funk. His job is to wreck but he wants to be loved, to be a hero. After an inspiring Bad Guys Anonymous meeting, Ralph quits "Wreck-It Ralph" so that he can join video game "Hero's Duty" in search of cred. He then partners with Vanellope (Silverman) to battle a bug that could destroy the entire arcade.

It's a can-do story wrapped in a retro gallery of video games and characters in a universe of jarring intensity and candy colors. But without breathing room, it drags like the comedown of a sugar high.
RICHARD CROUSE

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Reba McEntire is back with a new sitcom Life imitates art when her character moves to California to reinvent herself

COUNTRY COMEBACK

ABC/KAREN NEAL

▶ Reba McEntire plays Reba, a former singer who finds out her husband (Jeffrey Nordling, left) is cheating on her. She moves her kids to California to start over on "Malibu Country," premiering Friday at 8:30 p.m. on ABC.

Reba McEntire has remained at the top of the country music stratum for nearly 40 years — not a small feat in a business that is always hungry to find the next hot young thing.

"Well, it will sure keep you humble real quick by somebody saying, 'Nope, you're not young. You're not sexy. Go do something else,'" the singer says.

That's not something the star has ever had to experience, but her character in the new sitcom "Malibu Country" sure has. In the show, McEntire plays Reba, a singer who put her career on hold while her husband became a country music superstar. When she finds out he has been cheating on her, the fictional Reba moves her mom and the kids from Nashville to Malibu, where she attempts to reclaim her own dreams and a sense of self.

It's a similar situation — minus the infidelity — to what McEntire experienced when she moved her family to Los Angeles to reintroduce herself as a TV star on the sitcom "Reba," which ran from 2001-2007.

"Some of the stories that happened with Shelby [McEntire's son] and Narvel [her husband] and myself while we were [in L.A.], are translating that into this show," McEntire says. For instance?

"One night I was doing the taping of the show, and Narvel had to take Shelby to a school function. Narvel had a couple of bologna sandwiches and a paper sack and went to the country club-looking school campus, and here comes everybody with their ice coolers and caviar and tablecloths," McEntire says. "So it was little things like that that were a huge adjustment for us coming to L.A."

AMBER RAY

That other 'Nashville'

While Reba fights ageism in the music industry on ABC's "Malibu Country," a similar battle is taking place on the network's drama "Nashville," which finds a country music queen (Connie Britton) fighting to keep her throne against the rising success of a new star (Hayden Panettiere). Does the idea of dramatizing her behind-the-scenes life in Music City have any appeal to Reba McEntire?

"No," she says, "I like this one better. I want to play an imaginary character having fun in Malibu. Now, guest starring on ['Nashville'] — that would be a hoot. I'd like to do that."

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Movie review

'Iron Fists' pack a punch

CHAN KAM CHUE

▶ Lucy Liu is Madam Blossom in "The Man with the Iron Fists."

'The Man with the Iron Fists'
Director: RZA
Cast: Russell Crowe, RZA, Lucy Liu
Rating: R
Grade: ❶❷❸❹❺

Since it comes from a die-hard kung fu fan, you really would expect nothing but the best kind of homage from "The Man with the Iron Fists," the directorial debut of the Wu-Tang Clan's RZA. The film is a great example of a contemporary martial arts movie, drawing inspiration from the classics but providing a refreshing, youthful spin on the genre with a cast and production team the likes of which a new filmmaker could only dream. The movie follows the story of a lonely blacksmith (RZA) who unites with warriors and an assassin to destroy a group of traitors on a path of destruction. With a killer soundtrack, likable characters and a smart, witty script, "The Man with the Iron Fists" is fun, over-the-top and visually pleasing, even for those who aren't kung fu fans. For those who are, it's the complete package. **OLIVIA MORROW**

Movie review

'Flight' tanks

"Flight"
Director: Robert Zemeckis
Cast: Denzel Washington, Nadine Velazquez
Rating: R
Grade: ❶❷❸❹❺

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

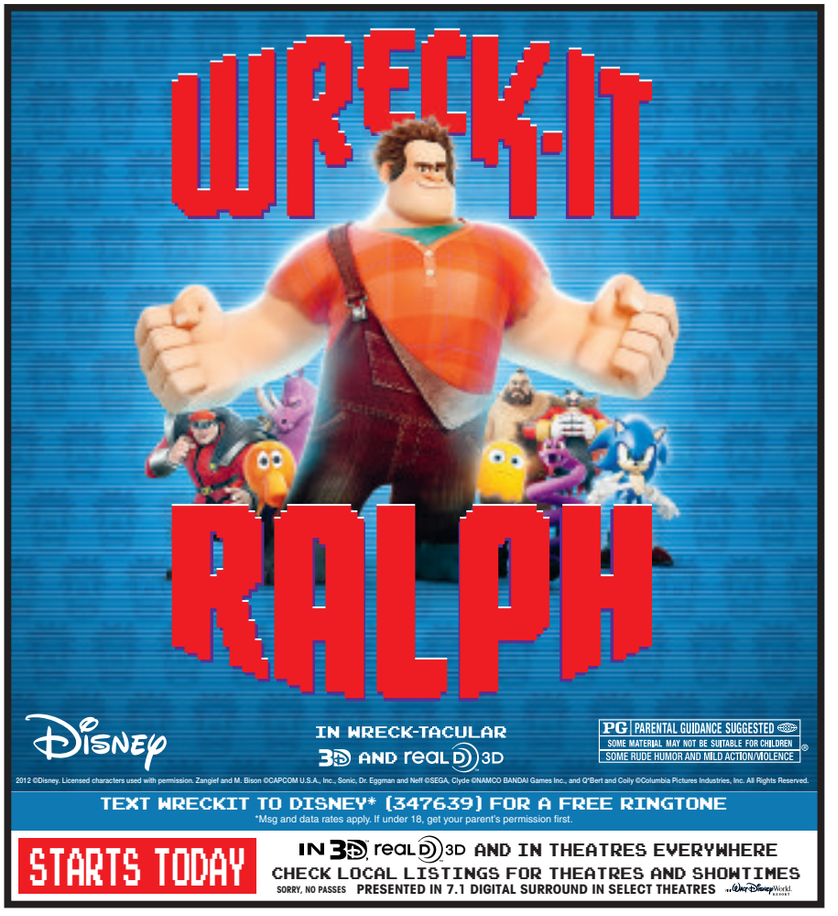
▶ Washington plays a troubled pilot confronting substance abuse issues in "Flight."

Is there another A-list leading man who explores the dark sides of his characters as often as Denzel Washington? Will Smith and Tom Cruise will occasionally let the heroic sides of their on-screen personas take a backseat, but Washington revels in mucking around in the mud. From "American Gangster" to "Safe House," he crafts complex characters you wouldn't want to sit next to on the bus.

Washington manages to subtly capture the ego and hubris that allow his hotshot character in "Flight" to present a sober face to the public, even though the film's visual language is frequently not as refined. A close-up of Washington's hand grasping a mini bottle of vodka and the accompanying swoosh sound is something that should be in a commercial, not in a film about the effects of alcoholism. (Another recent release that deals with alcoholism, "Smashed," is a much more touching and effective story about addiction.)

As much as Washington is enjoyable, the movie could have been more concise. It flits around a half-dozen themes — two or three too many — before the end credits roll.

RICHARD CROUSE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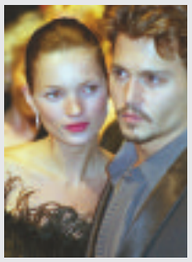
Talking points

Wood and Bell are married

It looks like those wedding rings **Evan Rachel Wood** and **Jamie Bell** were spotted wearing were for real, as the pair has in fact tied the knot, a rep for Wood tells Us Weekly. The small ceremony took place in California on Tuesday, with Wood wearing a gown by **Carolina Herrera**. "I am so happy for Evan. She is a timeless beauty and her gown in Chantilly lace captures this perfectly," Herrera says.

Moss: 'Years of crying' after Depp break up

It's been 14 years since they broke up, but **Kate Moss** is finally opening up about her four-year relationship with **Johnny Depp**, telling Vanity Fair that she felt "taken care of" by the "Pirates of the Caribbean" star. "There's nobody that's ever really been able to take care of me. Johnny did for a bit. I believed what he said. Like if I said, 'What do I do?' he'd tell me," Moss says, adding that losing that counsel was the hardest part of their split. "That's what I missed," she says. "I really lost having that gauge of somebody I could trust. [It was a] nightmare. Years and years of crying. Oh, the tears!"



THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip **@dorothyatmetro** **dorothy.robinson@metro.us**

How the stars celebrated Halloween

I never thought I'd say this, but thank God for the **Kardashians**. With so many East Coast Halloween parties cancelled, such as **Heidi Klum**'s annual A-list soiree (which has been rescheduled as a "haunted Christmas bash"), it was up to those elsewhere to keep the gossip sites running with their spooky celebrations.

First up are those ever-present social butterflies, the Kardashians. **Kim Kardashian** held a party at LIV nightclub in Miami dressed as Catwoman with date **Kanye West** coming in costume as Batman. They joined **Kourtney Kardashian**, who was dressed as Batgirl, while boyfriend **Scott Disick** tagged along as Robin.

Meanwhile, on the West Coast, noted humanitarian **Chris Brown** dressed up like a member of the Taliban (complete with a turban and a fake automatic weapon) to head to **Rihanna**'s Halloween party held at Greystone Manor in West Hollywood. And although they donned translucent masks, **Kristen Stewart** and **Robert Pattinson** couldn't disguise their identities as they headed to a Halloween party at a cemetery in Hollywood. Also living it up in LA: Facebook twins **Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss**, who joined **Dominic Cooper** at a party thrown by Treats! Magazine. **Billy Crystal** sat courtside at the Memphis Grizzlies vs. Los Angeles Clippers game but didn't join up with **Snoop Lion**, who wore a spooky mask to Clipper **Matt Barnes**' "Welcome Back To LA" post-game Halloween party at The Conga Room.

Jenny McCarthy celebrated her 40th birthday/ Halloween at the Gallery Nightclub at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino.

In Las Vegas, **Jenny McCarthy** showed off her still-hot bod at her 40th birthday party/Halloween party at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino. **Nelly** was also celebrating a birthday and Halloween in Las Vegas, but he showed up sans costume at The Bank Nightclub at the Bellagio for a special performance.

And finally, across the pond in England, **Gwen Stefani** went as Sandy from "Grease" at a bash thrown by British chat show host **Jonathan Ross** at his home in London. Bandmate and ex-boyfriend **Tony Kanal** went with her as Danny — no word on where husband **Gavin Rossdale** was.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

▶ Kim Kardashian went as Catwoman at her Halloween party at LIV nightclub at Fontainebleau Miami.

▶ Rihanna kept it simple in a black dress when she was crowned Queen of the West Hollywood Halloween Carnival at Greystone Manor Supperclub.

▶ Snoop Lion donned a mask for Los Angeles Clipper Matt Barnes' "Welcome Back To LA" post-game Halloween party at the Conga Room in L.A.

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AT LAST, THE ACTUAL VOTE

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TOM FOREMAN

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT FOR CNN

Early voting, like hipster glasses and going vegan, has been all the rage among the cool kids this year. As best I can make out, everyone in Oregon has already cast a ballot except for an agoraphobe named Stacy who spends all day watching the Lifetime network and calling each of her 27 cats, "Kaiser Wilhelm." I may have heard wrong, but you get my point: A significant part of the election is already over.

Still, if you cling to traditional ways, and are going to trek to your local polling place on Tuesday, here are some things you might want to bring along.

First, pack some snacks. After all the months of buildup any given voting site may involve a long wait (it's like the Department of Motor Vehicles with even less of a sense of humor,) and ever since open bribery fell out of favor, these places have become shockingly bleak.

No pretzel or funnel cake stands. No daiquiri bars. I'd suggest a small backpack with some Nilla Wafers and perhaps a banana. Or leftover Halloween candy.

Second, bring some facts. You can keep them in your smart phone or stashed away in your head, but for heaven's sake try to actually know something before you vote. And get them from a reliable, non-partisan source. Both presidential candidates have so vigorously twisted the truth that trusting either one of their campaigns is a leap of faith tantamount to joining a religious cult headed by a guy named Burt wearing a Packers jersey.

Third, bring some manners. No matter how Democratic or Republican your neighborhood may seem, someone in line is going to see things differently than you do. So under no circumstances should you talk about politics. Talk about non-controversial matters like the Middle East, animal rights, or Mark Sanchez's performance in the pocket.

Lastly, bring a bottle of champagne. Because whichever candidate you choose on Tuesday, we'll finally be at the end of this long national nightmare called Campaign 2012. And that is worth celebrating, no matter who wins.

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages.

Horoscope

Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** Being idea-oriented could make your brainstorms superior to your usual thinking. However, it might be smart to write down your ideas, so that you don't forget any of them.

Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Two potentially rewarding developments could present themselves when you're dealing with others. Handle these opportunities wisely and you'll be able to take advantage of both.

Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19**. You're not likely to have any trouble finding answers for critical questions that might arise. What might be problematic for you, however, is choosing which solution to use.

Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** A little self-imposed pressure can enhance your productivity and industriousness. Don't hesitate to tackle several tasks simultaneously, because they'll push you to even more success.

Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** If you can't bring everyone together, divide your time between two close friends who are both bidding for your companionship.

Aries **March 21-April 19.** Give priority to a domestic matter that is currently giving you fits. Manipulate what you must in order to achieve the outcome that would serve everyone the best.

Taurus **April 20-May 20.** This is one of those days in which conversations with close friends aren't likely to be comprised of idle chatter. Ideas of consequence are more apt to be discussed, so pay attention.

Gemini **May 21-June 20.** It behooves you to take the time to evaluate your present position and put your financial house in order. Making an in-depth analysis could reveal many buried opportunities.

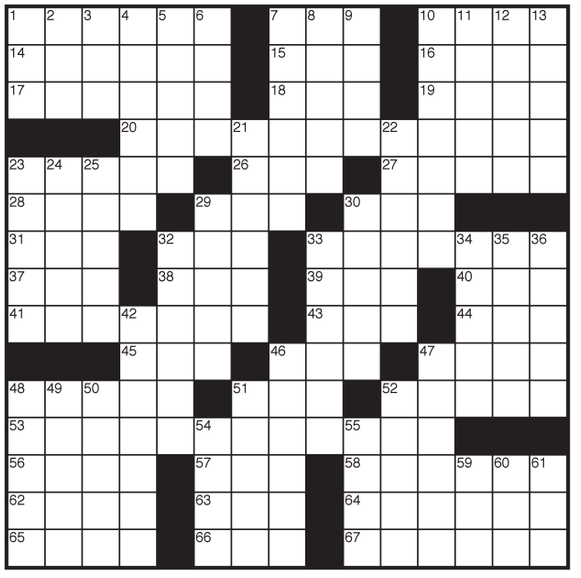
Cancer **June 21-July 22.** Unless you have a variety of activities and assignments from which to choose, you're likely to find yourself extremely restless and bored.

Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** Blending your intuitive perceptions with your logical ones could add an effective dimension to your thought processes.

Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** When involved commercially with friends, make your social relationship with them paramount over the business side of things. Good friends are harder to come by than entrepreneurial partners.

Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** Flexibility and willingness to change tactics as events dictate are just as important as trying to achieve an objective that you feel is personally important. Make sure you have your priorities straight. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**

Across
1 Plaster
7 Bark shrilly
10 Nasty cut
14 Slow down
15 Uris hero
16 1899 gold-rush town
17 Boombox sound
18 — de mer
19 Field of study
20 Mira or Betelgeuse (2 wds.)
23 Glossy
26 Cries at a circus
27 Leafy vegetable
28 "— Lang Syne"
29 ONU's hometown
30 Hen or mare
31 Dixie fighter
32 — Lanka
33 Played with a pencil
37 Way back when
38 Not prepaid
39 Miners dig it
40 Nest-egg letters
41 Kid's question (2 wds.)
43 Soho co.
44 Garden-pond fish
45 Literary miscellany
46 Overhead railways
47 Some narcs
48 Encouraging look
51 Andy Capp's wife
52 Comb contents
53 Wild orchid (2 wds.)
56 Pound sound
57 Law, to Caesar
58 Removed a knot
62 Nights before
63 Ja, to Jacques
64 On the double
65 Change decor
66 Menacing sound
67 Windows operating —



Down
1 Almost-grads
2 Lunar new year
3 Navaho foe
4 Worked with jade
5 Spooky noise
6 Garbage bin output
7 Honda rival
8 Burnoose wearers
9 Tablet
10 Ground, as teeth
11 Major artery
12 Do finger painting
13 Got the news
21 Cloud-seeding compound
22 Bounced back
23 Vaughan or Miles
24 "Hasta —!"
25 Macaroni shape
29 Cafe attraction
30 Arranges
32 Tea cakes
33 Blob of mayo
34 Compare
35 Form a butte
36 Dagwood's pooch
42 Trinidad music
46 Potion
47 Strong points
48 More crafty
49 Writer — Binchy
50 Ran in neutral
51 — -de-lis
52 Jane Fonda's dad
54 Wade through
55 Baby seals
59 Ego ending
60 When Paris sizzles
61 Abbot

	1	2			5			
		5	1	2			6	
				9	6		5	
	8		4			5		
	5	7				6	4	
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	4		5	1				
	9			3	8	2		
			6			3	8	

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

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	2				9		6	
4								9
	4	9	7			5		1
6	7						4	3
3		2			4	8	7	
1								2
	6		4				9	
		8	6	5				

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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▶ Look out for Metro's election coverage this Tuesday, November 5.

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GETTY IMAGES

▶ Tyson Chandler and the banged up Knicks host the Heat at MSG tonight at 8 p.m.

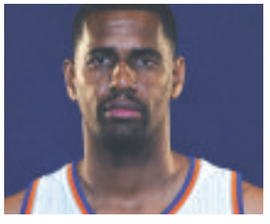
Old, injured ... contenders?

The Knicks head into their delayed season opener against the Heat Friday night, with many question marks, but according to head coach Mike Woodson, he likes where this team is headed.

Despite the mounting injuries to his aging roster, a lack of feel for who will be in the starting lineup and the fact that five major rotation players (starters Amar'e Stoudemire and Ronnie Brewer, and key reserves J.R. Smith, Marcus Camby and Rasheed Wallace) combined to play in only four exhibition games, Woodson sounded like a man who knows something the general public doesn't.

"It wasn't life and death [having key players miss chunks of the preseason], but it was important for me to kind of get a feel for the [new] rotation," Woodson said. "Time will tell. We'll just have to go to Plan B and get things in order with the opener [looming]."

One of the adjustments to a Plan B is adapting to the second opinion on Amar'e Stoudemire's knee cyst. Once thought to be a two-to-four week recovery, the Knicks announced Stoudemire would miss as many as eight weeks.



"Before training camp started, I was looking at the roster and saying we've got a lot of bigs. Now, all our bigs are mainly out."
KURT THOMAS, CENTER

The most ironic thing about the Knicks' frontcourt situation is that the league's oldest player, Kurt Thomas, is the healthiest of the veteran bigs. Thomas, whose leadership skills and personality are infectious, also hasn't allowed the injuries to stress him as he smiled when detailing the team's current situation.

"Before training camp started, I was looking at the roster and saying we've got a lot of bigs," Thomas said. "Now, all our bigs are mainly out, [so] I just got to continue to work and knock the rust off. ... I feel great — not bad when you turn 40."

Center Tyson Chandler is 10 years younger than Thomas and is still a question mark with his ailing left knee, but feels he'll "absolutely" be ready for opening night.

"We went through some things, [and] constantly talked to the trainers to see when guys would be ready to go," said Woodson. "We're hopeful to have most of those guys back [by opening night]. ... Thank God we had a little over a week to prepare [between the end of the preseason and opening night]."
TONY WILLIAMS

From Brooklyn to the King, Knicks shift focus

GETTY IMAGES

▶ LeBron James

With Thursday night's season opener against the Nets at Barclays Center abruptly postponed Wednesday afternoon, the Knicks must shift focus to the defending-champion Heat.

It's a whole different rival, but one that is actually much more established than the soon-to-be enemies across the East River.

Knicks general manager Glen Grunwald told the Daily News on Wednesday that his team was "ready to go" for their new season opener.

They will do so against a Heat team that won their own opener handily over the Celtics. LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh are all healthy and ready to go as well.

"Until [Amar'e Stoudemire] gets back, it gives other guys an opportunity to step up and play," Mike Woodson said. "That's what I'm going to be pushing guys to do. ... I think our team is a little bit deeper than what we had last year."
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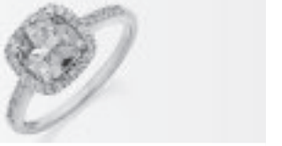

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